



Department Source: Community Development - NS

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: October 2, 2023

Re: Enforcement of Unlicensed Vehicles on Private Property

## Executive Summary

City Council requested a report regarding the enforcement of unlicensed vehicles on private property at their August 21, 2023 meeting.

## Discussion

The City Code of Ordinances addresses unlicensed vehicles on private property in Sec 11-263. City code declares any unlicensed, dismantled, inoperable or junk-filled vehicle to be a public safety hazard and a nuisance and can be removed through an abatement or referring the violator to the municipal prosecutor. Unlicensed vehicles are in violation when they have not been licensed for 90 days or longer. Unlicensed vehicles are also a violation of the Property Maintenance Code in Sec. 6-72 (Buildings and Building Regulations, Property Maintenance Code).

**Current Enforcement:** Neighborhood Services opened 227 cases under 11-263 between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. This period was selected to allow time for resolution of the cases. Of those, 54 were reported by citizens and four referred from City Council members with the remainder identified by staff. Staff-identified violations are generally found after receiving a complaint for other violations. The vast majority of cases (182) were resolved voluntarily with no additional enforcement action, 20 are active and 19 are closed or had no violation. Six were referred to prosecution and no vehicles were abated during this time period. While 11-263 addresses unlicensed, inoperable or junk filled vehicles, about 80% of the cases were opened for unlicensed vehicles and in about a quarter of the cases, the vehicle had multiple violations such as being both inoperable and unlicensed. [A map of where those cases were opened is attached.](#) The Third (82) and First (68) Wards saw the most cases followed by Second (37), Fourth (24), Fifth (9) and Sixth (7).

**Enforcement in Other Missouri Cities:** City staff conducted an informal survey of other communities in Missouri and found that enforcement of unlicensed vehicles is common throughout the state, although enforcement activities vary between abatement and prosecution. Unlicensed vehicles are a violation of city code in Kansas City, Springfield, Independence, Lees Summit, O'Fallon, St. Joseph and in some instances in St. Charles. It is not a violation in the City of Blue Springs.

St. Charles and Independence have adopted a lighter enforcement approach. In St. Charles, one unlicensed vehicle is allowed on residential property if parked on a paved surface in the rear of the property. Independence has adopted a staff policy that waives



enforcement if there are two or fewer vehicles with tags expired by one year or less, if they are parked on an approved surface and no other violations exist on the property.

**Police Enforcement:** Ticketing unlicensed vehicles driving on Columbia streets is the lowest enforcement priority by CPD. From July 1, 2022 to June 20, 2023, the municipal court processed 59 charges for unlicensed, inoperable, wrecked or junk vehicles under Sec. 14-547.

### Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None

Long-Term Impact: None

### Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Safe Community, Secondary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### Legislative History

Date	Action
08/06/2001	Council adopted Chapter 11, Article VII, Sec. 11-221 through 11-269 that established the enforcement procedure for health nuisances, weeds, and nuisance vehicles.

### Suggested Council Action

Some possible next steps include:

1. Taking no further action
2. Directing staff to gather additional public input on this issue.
3. Directing staff to take a lighter approach to enforcement without changing the ordinance, adopting a procedure similar to St. Charles or Independence.
4. Requesting an ordinance change to strike the enforcement of unlicensed vehicles from 11-263.